

Project Assistance Completion Report (PACR)

Public Awareness of Education Reform

*Contract OUT-HNE-I-809-97-00029-00, Improving Educational Quality (IEQ II)
Task Order No. 809*

I. PROJECT SUMMARY

Date of Authorization:	December 13, 1999
Project Assistance Completion Date:	March 31, 2001
Implementing Agencies:	American Institute of Research Juárez and Associates
Total Amount Authorized:	\$ 140,036
Total Amount Obligated and Expended:	\$ 140,036
Counterpart Contribution:	N/A

II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Introduction

The Public Awareness Activity, referred to as Social Communications for Reform Support, was a fourteen-month effort in support of USAID/G-CAP's initiatives in education reform support, specifically Education Strategic Objective, Intermediate Result #3: *Education policies and strategies that enhance gender equity and cultural pluralism are implemented*. The Activity built on USAID's Strategic Plan 1997-2001 and bilateral agreement with the Government of Guatemala (GOG), previous work in policy dialogue carried out under the USAID-funded Basic Education Strengthening Project (BEST), and a Task Order to the Improving of Educational Quality II (Project # 536-5858).

The overall result of the Social Communication Activity was to design, produce, disseminate, and train key opinion leaders in the use of communication tools to increase support of the education reform in terms of improving quality and enhancing cultural pluralism and gender equity in Guatemala. It was expected that the strategic design and use of these tools would increase awareness, discussion, and support for education reform particularly among two principal audiences: national opinion leaders and national and local education leaders. The Activity was to support and enhance the ongoing efforts of the Ministry of Education (MOE) and the Consultative Commission for Education Reform (CCRE) to inform selected audiences and motivate social participation in

education reform. By working closely with these and other civil society organizations (CSOs), including the private sector, the Activity was to enhance the capacity of Guatemalan education partners to plan and carry out future social communication efforts in support of education reform.

The key tasks to meet the overall result included:

1. Rapid assessment of perspectives of key members of the two main audience groups regarding education reform;
2. Identification of key users of communication tools and assessment of what they need and would use in terms of content and form for effective dissemination;
3. Development and production of a core set of social communication tools based on audience assessment and identification of key users;
4. Dissemination plan for use and application of communication tools by key audience;
5. Monitoring of Activity.

All activities and communication tools were designed to be coordinated closely with other components of USAID/G's efforts in education, particularly other policy reform support efforts.

Status of Completion

The Activity is complete and the terms and conditions of the Task Order have been met. All tasks listed in the Task Order Statement of Work have been completed, technical assistance was provided to partners, deliverables have been received by USAID/G, and the overall result has been met.

Assessment of Achievement of Purpose

Accomplishments and Contributions

The greatest accomplishment and contribution of the Activity was the production and dissemination of a CD-Rom with the PowerPoint presentation titled: *“Educación para Todos: ¿Llegaremos a Donde Queremos Llegar?”* This presentation represents the update and expansion of a PowerPoint presentation titled, *“Aprendiendo, Desarrollamos Nuestra Guatemala”* that was originally produced in diskettes and overheads under the Policy Dialogue component of USAID/G's BEST Project in 1997. The expanded and updated version produced by the Activity is contained in a CD-Rom along with several prefabricated presentations designed for specific audiences such as educators, researchers, NGO leaders, press corps, elected officials in the executive and legislative branches of government, or private sector leaders. The presentations are all based on a master that contains 92 slides. The presentations vary in their length and focus depending on the primary audience. Each presentation is programmed with automation effects and speakers' notes. Users have the option

of using the presentation as it appears on the CD or of personalizing it to fit the presenter's specific needs. Dissemination of the CD was broad and included national, international, public, private, and NGO leaders.

Tangible, immediate contributions of the communication tool include several examples of increased awareness, discussion, and support for education reform: effective use by commercial sector leaders to persuade the National Advertising Council to focus a national 20-year campaign on education as the number one priority in Guatemala; use by leading CSO alliance (Gran Campaña por la Educación) to lobby for increased financing for education sector; use of data by education leaders, GOG/MOE, and CSOs resulting in increased press coverage; use by the USAID/MSI Policy Reform Support Activity in training sessions on policy and stakeholder analysis among selected CSOs.

A second contribution that the Activity has made is the Audience Assessment. This adds to the relatively small pool of secondary audience research available for the design, implementation, and monitoring of future efforts to raise public awareness and support for education reform issues, particularly cultural pluralism and gender equity. Key findings were disseminated to partners including the MOE and CCRE via formal presentations of study results and the Executive Summary of the final report were forwarded by the Activity to all respondents. Key findings include:

- Consensus among interviewees that the current state of education is poor and that the sector requires “investment” in order to improve;
- A general perception that reform of the education system is urgently needed but there is not consensus on the Parity Commission's Education Reform Design – on the “how-to”;
- The public needs information on what education reform actually is and how it relates to citizens' daily lives before attitudes about it will improve - participants emphasized the need for information dissemination, dialogue, and consensus before society at large will endorse reform and participate;
- Informational material should be mostly visual with little text, be distributed locally, use testimonials as a medium, and be culturally appropriate;
- The CCRE is believed to be capable of leading a communications strategy directed at decision-makers and is well-suited because it is at the margins of political interests;
- More information is needed as to what intercultural education is and how it works;
- Achieving gender equity is believed to be important though more conservative respondents felt it is less important than other aspects of reform.

Activity staff contributed technical assistance to the formatting of the MOE/CCRE's *Diálogo y Consenso* social mobilization materials, including a poster and an informational booklet used with the 331 municipal education council groups. The Activity also financed the printing of these materials.

Lessons Learned

Replicability and Sustainability

In terms of replicating the CD-Rom containing important and unique data and information on education in Guatemala, there has been enough interest generated by the Activity among individual and organization leaders that USAID/G is programming funds to provide for at least one more update of the key slides of the Power Point presentation.

The use of the communication tool by commercial sector leaders to persuade a national advertising coalition to adopt education as its focus for a 20-year long public awareness campaign signals steps for sustainability of using communications to generate active support for education reform.

The quality data/information on education that both this Activity and the policy dialogue component under BEST provided in the form of attractive, user-friendly social communication tools such as PowerPoints, overheads, and booklets has been met with overwhelming requests for more and in a wider variety of forms. People ranging in positions from Social Cabinet Ministers to NGO directors, to local education officials, parents, and students have requested copies of the social communication tools as well as regular updating of the data/information provided through USAID/G activities. This interest and motivation to obtain and use data/information will hopefully lead to sustainability among national organizations and alliances in using, generating and disseminating information needed to propel policy reform forward.

The Activity could have gone farther in the communications process had it included full-time marketing communications expertise on its team. For instance, the Audience Assessment required a significant amount of time from the Activity and a more streamlined, rapid study design would have left more time for the remaining elements of the communications process to be attended. Also, the use of the primary research to complement secondary research would have led to working with a representative group of partners and other stakeholders to develop a Creative Brief for a communications strategy, as was originally planned but not achieved. Communications expertise would also have allowed for the development of a full set of complementary communications tools using the CD-Rom as the base for materials that could have been replicated by other sectors such as press, advertising, and public relations and would have been more user-friendly for CSO partners than is the CD alone.

The Public Awareness of Education Reform Activity was to enhance the capacity of Guatemalan education partners to plan and carry out future social communication efforts in support of education reform. Given constraints in both time and lack of specific operational links between Activity and partners' staff, this was not achieved as fully as it might have been.

Design and Implementation of New Related Activities

USAID/G technical and limited financial support to the growing Guatemalan CSO initiative to generate policy dialogue and public awareness over several years represents an opportunity for USAID/G to “do more with less”. The CSO initiative needs technical assistance in the areas of customer research, data/information analysis and generation, and the design and use of dialogue and advocacy materials. This support is expected by leading CSOs to increase public and individual commitment to improving the education system so that quality basic education becomes more accessible to Guatemalan children and youth.

Lessons learned from this Activity suggest that new related USAID/G activities would benefit greatly from having expertise in communications marketing for development throughout the Life of Activity.

The impact of all education reform efforts and the work of individual and organization leaders that promote specific policy changes will increase significantly when the society is cognizant of the state of education in Guatemala. Public awareness of the state of education: its implications for each family and community, the most significant factors that produce it, and the feasible solutions are necessary before the education reform can expect enough support to be able to make significant progress. A large-scale, multi-level and integrated public awareness campaign to get public opinion behind reform efforts is needed. USAID can facilitate this effort with its global expertise in social marketing and education reform support in partnership with different alliances that are moving in this direction. USAID/G could work with partners to carry out a strategic, comprehensive plan to integrate education policy analysis with education policy dialogue, advocacy, awareness, political salesmanship, and to build institutional capacity that can strategically use this integration to effect purposeful reform.

New activities should be designed to link technical work with local partners so that the capacity of Guatemalan education partners to plan and carry out future social communication efforts in support of education reform is enhanced.

III. CLOSE OUT VOUCHERS AND END-USE MONITORING

See Attachments A and B.

Drafter: WS DuFlon _____

Date: _____

Clearance: JB Richards _____

Date: _____

M Anderson _____

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G Córdón _____

Date: _____

R Morales _____

Date: _____